

Executive Proclamation

State of South Dakota

Office of the Governor

Whereas, Benjamin Black Elk was born in 1899 to Nicholas Black Elk and Katie War Bonnet, was entrusted with the Oglala Lakota history, ceremonies and culture by his father, the great holy man Black Elk, and assisted in the translation of his father's vision and story for all to understand the firsthand experience of American Indian life at the end of the nineteenth century and his vision of the future; and,

Whereas, Ben Black Elk helped preserve Oglala Lakota traditions through the education of all people as he traveled throughout the nation and Europe, as well as emphasizing the importance of American Indian history to school children on the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation; and,

Whereas, Ben Black Elk counseled local and national leaders, such as the late Senator Robert Kennedy, on the importance of mutual understanding, respect, and education of American Indian history, so all historical perspectives are reflected in the unified story of America; and,

Whereas, Ben Black Elk took it upon himself to educate people about the Oglala Lakota at Mount Rushmore National Memorial as he served as an American Indian ambassador to national and international visitors who witnessed his commitment to sharing cultural traditions with the world; and,

Whereas, Ben Black Elk was a leading advocate of tourism in the Black Hills, or Paha Sapa, and all of South Dakota. He promoted cultural sites and history as he traveled the nation, and his dedication to tourism is celebrated in South Dakota's Ben Black Elk Award which is the highest tourism accolade in the state; and,

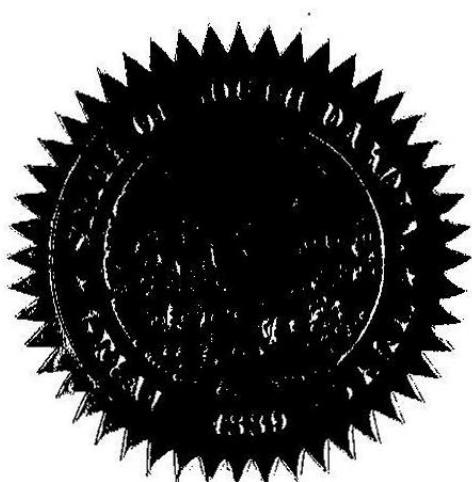
Whereas, Ben Black Elk's legacy and his invaluable knowledge of the traditions of his people have surpassed his lifetime by the continued dedication of the Black Elk family and their commitment to sharing their family's history; and,

Whereas, Ben Black Elk embodied a leader dedicated to the success of his community, the preservation of traditional life and cultural history, and the promotion of American Indian history as a celebration of his people to visitors of South Dakota, to Americans throughout the nation, and to the people of the world:

Now, Therefore, I, M. Michael Rounds, Governor of the state of South Dakota, do hereby proclaim October 11, 2009, as

BEN BLACK ELK DAY

in South Dakota.



In Witness Whereof, I have hereunto set my hand and caused to be affixed the Great Seal of the state of South Dakota, in Pierre, the Capital City, this Sixth Day of October in the Year of Our Lord, Two Thousand and Nine.



M. Michael Rounds, Governor

Attest:



Chris Nelson

Chris Nelson, Secretary of State